

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

2. (amended) A birnavirus mutant according to claim 1, [characterised in that] wherein the mutation is a substitution.

The IB DV

3. (amended) ~~A birnavirus~~ mutant according to claim 1, [characterised in that] wherein the mutation is an insertion of a heterologous nucleic acid sequence.

4. (amended) A birnavirus mutant according to claim 3, [characterised in that] wherein the heterologous nucleic acid sequence encodes a polypeptide and the heterologous nucleic acid sequence is under the control of an expression control sequence regulating the expression of the sequence in a cell infected with the virus mutant.

5. (amended) A birnavirus mutant according to [claims 1-4, characterised in that] claim 1, wherein the birnavirus is infectious bursal disease virus (IBDV).

The IB DV

6. (amended) ~~A birnavirus~~ mutant according to claim ~~1~~, [characterised in that] wherein the mutation is in the genome of a virulent field virus.

The IB DV

7. (amended) ~~A birnavirus~~ mutant according to claim ~~2~~, [characterised in that] wherein the mutation is in the genome of a vaccine strain[, preferably in vaccine strain D78].

The IB DV

8. (amended) ~~A birnavirus~~ mutant according to [claims ~~1~~-7, characterised in that] claim ~~1~~, wherein the mutant has a mutated start codon and three stop codons in the 5'-end of the VP5 gene as shown in SEQ ID NO:7.

9. (amended) ~~A birnavirus~~ ^{the IBDV} according to [claims ~~8-8~~, characterised in that] claim 8, wherein the IBDV expresses a chimeric VP2 protein comprising virus neutralizing epitopes of different antigenic IBDV types.

10. (amended) A vaccine against a birnavirus infection in animals, [characterised in that it comprises] comprising a birnavirus mutant according to any one of claims 1-9 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

Please cancel claim 11 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof.

12. (amended) A method [according to claim 11, characterised in that the method comprises] for determining birnavirus infection in an animal, comprising the steps of:

- (i) incubating a sample suspected of containing anti-birnavirus antibodies[,] with VP5 antigen,
- (ii) allowing the formation of antibody-antigen complex, and
- (iii) detecting the presence of the antibody-antigen complex,

wherein the presence of the complex indicates a birnavirus infection.

13. (amended) A diagnostic kit suitable for carrying out a method according to [claims 11-12] claim 12, comprising VP5 antigen coated on a solid phase.

Please cancel claim 14 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof.

Please add the following new claims 15 - 31.

Sub
B4

-- 15. A birnavirus mutant according to claim 7, wherein the vaccine strain is D78. --

-- 16. A diagnostic test kit according to claim 13, further comprising an enzyme-conjugated antibody and substrate to said enzyme. --

Sub
B5

-- 17. A method for determining birnavirus infection in an animal, comprising:

- (i) incubating a sample suspected of containing VP5 with anti-birnavirus VP5 antibody;
- (ii) allowing the formation of antibody-antigen complex; and
- (iii) detecting the presence of antibody-antigen complex, wherein the presence of the complex indicates birnavirus infection. --

-- 18. A diagnostic test kit for carrying out a method according to claim 17, comprising a container having anti-~~birnavirus~~ ^{IBDV} VP5 antibody. --

-- 19. A diagnostic test kit according to claim 18, further comprising a second labelled antibody which will detect said complex. --

-- 20. A diagnostic test kit according to claim 18, wherein the antibody is labelled. --

-- 21. A diagnostic test kit according to claim 18, wherein the antibody is coated on a solid phase. --

-- 22. A birnavirus according to claim 2, wherein the birnavirus is ~~IBDV~~ ^B. --

-- 23. A birnavirus according to claim 3, wherein the birnavirus is ~~IBDV~~. --

Sub B6 -- 24. A birnavirus according to claim 22, wherein the mutation is in the genome of a virulent field virus. --

-- 25. A birnavirus according to claim 23, wherein the mutation is in the genome of a virulent field virus. --

AB -- 26. A birnavirus according to claim 22, wherein the mutation is in the genome of a vaccine strain. --

-- 27. A birnavirus according to claim 23, wherein the mutation is in the genome of a vaccine strain. --

37 CFR 1.603 -- 28. A birnavirus according to claim 26, wherein the vaccine strain is D78. --

-- 29. A birnavirus according to claim 27, wherein the vaccine strain is D78. --

Sub B7 -- 30. A birnavirus according to claim 6, wherein the IBDV expresses a chimeric VP2 protein comprising virus neutralizing epitopes of different antigenic IBDV types. --

37 CFR 1.603 -- 31. A vaccine against ^{an} ~~a birnavirus~~ ^{IBDV} infection in animals, comprising ^{aⁿ IBDV} ~~a birnavirus~~ mutant according to any one of claims 22 - 30 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier. --

REMARKS

Claims 2 - 10, 12 and 13 are amended, claims 11 and 14 canceled, and claims 15 - 31 are added, hereby. Claims 1 - 10, 12, 13 and 15 - 31 are presented for examination.